the ROHMER REVIEW

No. 3

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The picture of Boris Karloff as Fu Manchu appearing on p. 27 is copyright 1932 by Metro-Goldwin-Mayer, and reprinted by permission of Movie Star News, New York. Tom Walker, White Bear Lake, Minnesota, prepared the cover illustration (p. 32) depicting a scene from "The Green Spider."

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We are pleased to be able to reprint in this issue the historically significant short story "The Green Spider"--significant because its publication nearly 65 years ago marked the appearance of A. Sarsfield Ward (later to become Sax Rohmer) on the literary scene. We are indebted to Mrs. Elizabeth Sax Rohmer for making this reprinting possible.

Ronald Bennett has resigned from the Review's editorial staff to devote full time to medical school, which he enters this fall. We wish him well.

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THE GREEN SPIDER
Being an Account of the Singular Case of Professor Brayme-Skepley

by A. Sarsfield Ward

I find from my notes that Professor Brayme-Skepley's great lecture which was to revolutionise modern medicine should have been delivered upon the fifteenth of March, and many of Europe's leading scientists were during the preceding week to be seen daily in the quaint old streets of Barminster--for the entire world of medical science was waiting agog for the revelation of the Brayme-Skepley treatment.

Many people wondered that Brayme-Skepley should deliver a lecture so vastly important in old-world Barminster rather than in London; but he was not a man to be coerced--so the savants, perforce, came to Barminster.

At twelve, midnight, as nearly as can be ascertained, on the fourteenth of March the porter in charge of the North Gate--by which direct admission can be gained to the quadrangle--was aroused by a loud ringing of his bell.

Hurrying to the door of his little lodge, he was surprised to find at the gate the gaunt figure of Professor Brayme-Skepley, enveloped in a huge fur coat. He hastened to unlock the wicket and admit the great scientist.

"I am sorry to trouble you at so late an hour, Jamieson," said the Professor, "but there are some little preparations which I must make for to-morrow's lecture. I shall probably be engaged in the bacteriological laboratory for a couple of hours. You will not mind turning out with the key?"

He slipped a sovereign into the porter's hand as he spoke, and Jamieson only too gladly acquiesced.

The fire in the little sitting-room of the lodge was almost extinct, but the man revived it, and putting on a shovelful of coal, lighted his pipe, and sat smoking for about an hour. At one o'clock he stepped outside, and glanced across the quadrangle.

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The Professor was still working, and, finding the night air chilly, Jamieson was about to turn in again when a light suddenly appeared in the top window of one of those ancient houses in Spindle Lane. The house was the last of the row, and overlooked the bacteriological laboratory.

"That's old Kragg's house," muttered the porter; "but I didn't know anybody lived there since the old man died."

The light was a vague and flickering one, almost like that of a match; and, as he watched, it disappeared again. There was something uncanny about this solitary light in a house which he believed to be uninhabited, so, with a slight shudder, Jamieson returned to the comforts of his fireside.

Curiously enough, I had been reading upon this particular night in Harborne's rooms; and at something like twenty minutes past two I knocked the ashes from my pipe, and was about to depart--when there came a sudden scuffling on the stairs. We both turned just as the door was flung open, and Jamieson, white-faced and wild-eyed, stumbled, breathless, into the room.

"Thank Heaven I've found somebody up!" he gasped. "Yours was the only window with a light!"

"Where's the brandy?" I said, for the man seemed inclined to faint upon the sofa.

A stiff glass of cognac pulled him together somewhat, and, with a little colour returning to his face, but still wild of eye, he burst out:

"Professor Brayme-Skepley has been murdered!"

"Murdered!" echoed Harborne.

"And no mortal hand has done the thing, sir!" continued the frightened man. "Heaven grant I never see the like again!"

"You're raving!" I said with an assumption of severity, for Jamieson's condition verged closely upon that of hysteria. "Try to talk sense. Where is the Professor?"

"In the bacteriological laboratory, sir."

"How long has he been there?"

"Since twelve o'clock!"

I glanced at Harborne in surprise.

"What was he doing there?" inquired the latter.

"He said he had some preparations to make for his lecture."

"Well, get on! Here, have another pull at the brandy. How do you know he's dead?"

"I went to ask him how much longer he was going to be."

"Well?"

"He didn't answer to my knocking, although there was a light burning. The door was locked from the inside, so I got on to the dust-box, and just managed to reach a window-ledge. I pulled myself up far enough to look inside; and then--I dropped down again!"

"But what did you see, man? What did you see?"

"I saw Professor Brayme-Skepley lying dead on the floor among broken jars by an overturned table. There were only two lamps on--those over the table--and his head came just in the circle of light. His body was in shadow."

"What else?"

"Blood! His hair all matted!"

"Come on, Harborne!" I cried, seizing my hat. "You too, Jamieson!"

"For the love of Heaven, gentlemen," gasped the man, grasping us each by an arm, "I couldn't! You haven't heard all!"

"Then get on with it!" said Harborne. "Every second is of importance."

"I ran for the window ladder, gentlemen; and when I came back with it the electric lamps were out!"

"Out?"

"I ran up the ladder, and looked in at the window; and saw--how can I tell you what I saw?"

"Don't maunder!" shouted Harborne. "What was it?"

"It was a thing, sir, like a kind of green spider--only with a body twice the size of that football!"

Harborne and I looked at one another significantly.

"You're a trifle overwrought, Jamieson," I said, laying my hand upon his shoulder. "Stay here until we come back."

The man stared at me.

"You don't believe it," he said tensely; "and you'll go into that place unprepared. But I'll swear

on the Book that there was some awful thing not of this earth creeping in the corner of the laboratory!"

Harborne, with his hand on the door-knob, turned undecidedly.

"Which corner, Jamieson?" he inquired.

"The north-west, sir. I just caught one glimpse of it through the opening in the partition."

"How could you see it, since all the lights were out?" Harborne asked.

The porter looked surprised. "That never occurred to me before, sir," he said; "but I think it must have shone--something like the bottles of phosphorus, sir!"

"Come on!" said my friend. And without further ado we ran downstairs into the Square.

A cheerful beam of light from the door of the lodge cut the black shadows of the archway as we approached, and served to show that the panic-stricken porter had left the wicket open. As we hurried through and sprinted across the quadrangle we were met by a cold, damp wind from the direction of the river. The night was intensely dark, and the bacteriological laboratory showed against the driving masses of inky cloud merely as a square patch of blackness.

"Here's the ladder," said Harborne suddenly; and we both paused, undecided how to act.

"Try the door," I suggested.

We rattled the handle of the door, but it was evidently locked, so that for a moment we were in a quandary. Harborne mounted the ladder and peered into the impenetrable shadows of the laboratory, but reported that there was nothing to be seen.

"We must burst the door in," I said; "it hasn't a very heavy lock."

We accordingly applied our shoulders to the door, and gave a vigorous push. The lock yielded perceptibly. I then crashed my heel against the woodwork just over the keyhole, and the door flew upon. We immediately detected a most peculiar odour.

"It's the broken bottles," muttered Harborne. "The switch is over against the wall by the bookcase; we must go straight for that."

Cautiously we stepped into the darkness, and at the third or fourth step there was a crackling of

glass underfoot. My boot slipped where some sticky substance lay, and I gave an involuntary shudder. A moment later I heard an exclamation of disgust.

"The wall is all wet!" said Harborne.

Then he found the electric buttons, and turned on the lights in rapid succession.

Heavens! How can I describe the picture revealed! Never have I witnessed such a scene of chaos, fearsome in its indications of an incredible struggle.

At first glance the place gave an impression of having been wantonly wrecked by a madman. Scarcely a jar or bottle remained upon the shelves, all being strewn in fragments upon the floor, which was simply swimming in the spilled spirits and preservatives. The door of the case that had contained the specimens of bacilli was wide open, and the glass completely smashed. The priceless contents were presumably to be sought among the hundred and one objects lying in the liquid on the floor.

Most of the books from the shelf were distributed about the place as though they had been employed as missiles, and one huge volume was wedged up under the frosted glass of the skylight in the centre of the roof. In the wood of the partition a lancet was stuck, and a horribly suggestive streak linked it with a red pool upon the floor. A table was overturned, and the two lamps immediately above it were broken. Of Professor Brayme-Skepley there was no sign, but his hat and fur coat hung upon a hook where he had evidently placed them on entering.

For some time we surveyed the scene in silence. Then Harborne spoke.

"What are these marks on the wall?" he said. "They are still wet. And where is the Professor?"

The marks alluded to were a series of impressions in the shape of irregular rings passing from the pool on the floor to the four walls and up the walls to where the shadows of the lamp shades rendered it impossible to follow them. I pulled down a lamp, and turned the shade upwards, whereupon was revealed a thing that caused me a sudden nausea.

The marks extended right to the top of the wall, and could furthermore be distinguished upon the ceiling; and on the framework of the skylight was the

reddish-brown impression of a human hand!

"Drop it!" said Harborne huskily. "If we stay here much longer we shall have no pluck left for looking behind the partition."

The northern end of the laboratory is partitioned off to form a narrow apartment, which runs from side to side of the building, but is only some six feet in width. It is lined with shelves whereon are stored the greater part of the materials used in experiments, and is lighted by a square window at the Spindle Lane end, beneath which is a sink. The partition does not run flush up to the western wall, but only to within three feet of it, leaving an opening connecting the store-room with the laboratory proper. There are two electric lamps in the place, one over the sink, and the other in the centre; but they cannot be turned on from the laboratory, the switch being behind the partition. Consequently the store-room was in darkness, and, ignorant of what awful thing might be lurking there, we yet, in justice to the missing man, had no alternative but to enter.

Harborne, whose pallor can have been no greater than my own, strode quickly up the laboratory, and passed through the opening in the partition, I following closely behind. I heard the click of the electric switch; but only one lamp became lighted. That over the sink was broken.

We were both, I think, anticipating some gruesome sight; but, singular to relate, the only abnormal circumstance that at first came under our notice was that of the broken lamp. A sudden draught of air, damp and cold, that set the other shade swinging drew our attention to the fact that the window had been pulled right away from its fastenings and lay flat down against the wall. Then Harborne detected the gruesome tracks right along the centre of the floor; and under the window we made a further discovery.

The wall all round the casement was smeared with blood, and the marks of a clutching hand showed in all directions.

"Good heavens!" I muttered; "this is horrible! It looks as though he had been dragged---"

There was a queer catch in Harborne's voice as he answered: "We must get out a party to scour the

marshes."

"Hark!" I said. "Jamieson has been knocking some of them up. Here they come across the quad."

A moment later an excited group was surveying the strange scene in the laboratory.

"Clear out and get lanterns, you fellows!" shouted Harborne. "His body has been dragged through the window!"

"What's this about a green spider?" called several men.

"Don't ask me!" said my friend. "I am inclined to agree with Jamieson that this is not the doing of a man. We must spread out and examine Spindle Lane and the surrounding country until we find the Professor's body."

During the remainder of that never-to-be-forgotten night a party which grew in number as the hours wore on to dawn scoured the entire countryside for miles round. Towards five o'clock the rain suddenly broke over the marshes, and drenched us all to the skin, so that it was a sorry gathering that returned at daybreak to Barminster. The local police had taken charge of the laboratory, and urgent messages had been sent off to Scotland Yard; but when the London experts arrived on the scene we had nothing more to tell them than has already been recounted. Harborne, Doctor Davidson, and myself had devoted the whole of our attention to Spindle Lane and the immediate vicinity of the mysterious crime; but our exertions were not rewarded by the smallest discovery.

Such, then, were the extraordinary but inadequate data which were placed in the hands of the London investigators, and upon which they very naturally based a wholly erroneous theory.

This was the condition of affairs upon the night of the 16th, when Harborne suddenly marched into my rooms, and unceremoniously deposited a dripping leather case, bearing the initials J. B. S., in my fender.

"Any news?" I cried, springing up.

"Not likely to be!" he answered. "You might almost think these detectives have assumed all along that they are dealing with a case of the supernatural,

and have, in consequence, overlooked certain clues which, had the circumstances been less bizarre, they would have instantly followed up."

"You have some theory, then? What is in this bag?"

There was that in Harborne's manner which I could not altogether fathom as he evasively replied:

"Leaving the bag for a moment, let me just place the facts before you as they really are, and not as they appear to be. I must confess that, last night, I was more than half inclined to agree with the detectives; and it is eminently probable that but for one thing I should now be in complete agreement with the other investigators--who believe that some huge and unknown insect entered the laboratory and bore away the Professor! When I left you and Doctor Davidson yesterday morning I immediately went in search of Jamieson, and found him--three-parts intoxicated. As you have probably heard, he has since become wholly so, and the detectives have utterly failed to extract a sane word from him. In this respect, therefore, I was first in the field; and from him I obtained the one additional clue needed. About one a.m.--an hour after Brayme-Skepley had entered the laboratory--Jamieson came to the door of his lodge, and saw a light in the end house of Spindle Lane."

"But surely the police have questioned all the tenants in Spindle Lane?"

"The end house is empty."

"Have they examined it?"

"Certainly. But they merely did so as a matter of form: they had no <u>particular</u> reason for doing so. As a result they found nothing. What there was to find I had found before their arrival on the scene."

"I am afraid I don't altogether follow."

"Wait a minute. When I extracted from the porter the fact that he had seen a light in this house the entire affair immediately assumed a different aspect. The key to the mystery was in my hands. I went round into Spindle Lane, and surveyed the end house from the front. It was evidently empty, for the ground floor windows were almost without glass.

"As I did not want to take anyone into my confidence at this stage of the proceedings it was

impracticable to apply for the key, but upon passing round to the north I found that there was a back door with three stone steps leading up from the water's edge. I looked about for some means of gaining these steps--for I did not wish to excite attention by getting out a college boat. In the end I jumped for it. I got off badly from the muddy ground, for the rain was coming down in torrents, but, nevertheless, I landed on the bottom step--off which I promptly shot into the river!

"As I was already drenched to the skin this mattered little, and, notwithstanding my condition, a thrill of gratification warmed me on finding the door to be merely latched. Just as a party of six which had been scouring the east valley appeared upon the opposite bank I entered, and shut the door behind me."

"Well--what then?"

"I went up to the room overlooking the laboratory--for, although no one seems to have attached any particular importance to the circumstance, from the window of this room you could, if the lab. window were bigger, easily spring through."

"And what did you find there?"

"The origin of the mysterious light."

"Which was?"

"A match! Now, you will agree with me that green spiders do not use matches. Inference: That some human being had been in the room on the night of the murder, and had struck a match, which had been observed by Jamieson. There were also certain marks which considerably mystified me at first. On the thick grime of the window-ledge--inside--it was evident that a board had rested. That is to say, a board had been, for some reason, placed across the room. The mortar had fallen off the wall in one corner, and here I found on the floor an impression as though a box had stood on end there--evidently to support the other extremity of the board. My next discovery was even more interesting. I found traces of finger marks--which, by the way, I removed before leaving--on the sill and around the inside of the window-frame. Someone had come in by the window!

"But I remembered that, until I opened it to

investigate, the window had been closed. Therefore the mysterious visitor had closed it behind him. Since his bloodstained finger marks testified to the state of his hands on entering, how had he opened the window from outside--a somewhat difficult operation--and yet left no traces upon the sash? For there were none. I assumed, by way of argument, that he had opened the window from the inside.

"I had now constructed a hypothetical assassin who had got into the end house in Spindle Lane, entered the bacteriological laboratory, murdered the Professor, returned through the window, and struck a match--for there were traces of blood upon it. Why had he come back to the room, and by what means had he reached the window of the laboratory? It was upon subsequently examining the laboratory (for the local officer in charge, being an acquaintance, raised no objection to my doing so) that two points became clear. First: That the window could never have been opened from outside. Second: The probability that a plank had been placed across--the same plank that had been used for some other mysterious purpose!

"Working, then, upon this theory, it immediately became evident that a plank could only have been placed in position from one of the windows. Here I had an enlightening inspiration. My assassin must have entered the house from the riverside, as I had done! How had he conveyed the plank into the place? A boat! You will mark that this was all pure supposition. Nevertheless, I determined, for the moment, to assume that a plank had been used.

"It was with this idea before me that I made my examination of the laboratory, and the various facts, viewed in this new light, began to assume their proper places. The horrible marks, suggestive of an incredible assailant, which so horrified us when we first observed them, were less inexplicable when regarded as <u>intentional</u> and not accidental! To consider the handmark upon the ceiling, for example, as incidental to a struggle for life, pointed to an opponent possessing attributes usually associated with insects; but it was the easiest thing in the world for a tall man, standing upon a table, to imprint such a mark! This startling revelation, taken

in conjunction with the locked door and the impossibility of anyone entering the place from the quadrangle, brought me face to face with a plausible solution of the mystery.

"The elaborate nature of the affair pointed to premeditation, and the fact that the missing man had locked the door was most significant. Who could have known that he would be there upon this particular night, and why had he failed to unlock the door? For you will remember that the key was in the lock. Then, again, how did it come about that his cries for assistance did not arouse the people living in Spindle Lane?

"These ideas carried me to the second stage of my theory, and I assumed that a plank had been placed in position for the purpose of exit from, and not of entrance to, the laboratory! My final conclusion was as follows:

"Professor Brayme-Skepley entered the end house in Spindle Lane from a boat--which he obtained at Long's boathouse--bearing a plank and some kind of box or case. The plank he placed from window to window, the case upon the floor of the house in the Lane. He then returned to his boat, and landed beside the house. Entering the quadrangle, as we know, he went into the laboratory, and locked the door. His next proceeding was to smash everything breakable, wrench the window from its fastenings, and imprint the weird tracks and marks which proved so misleading. The book beneath the skylight and the lancet in the woodwork were the artistic touches of a man of genius. By this time it was close upon one o'clock, and, desirous of ascertaining whether his apparatus for bringing about the spider illusion was ready for instant use, he crawled from window to window. It was his match that Jamieson saw from the lodge door, and had Jamieson been a man of mettle the whole plot must have failed.

"He then, probably, grew very impatient whilst awaiting the coming of Jamieson, but he heard him ultimately, and lay in the light of the lamps as we have heard. All fell out as he had planned. Jamieson climbed on to the dust-box and looked into the laboratory; then he ran for the window ladder, as

a reasoning mind would have easily foreseen he would do. The Professor, during his absence, broke the lamps, climbed along his plank, and pulled it after him."

I had listened with breathless interest so far, but I now broke in: "How about the spider?"

"Perfectly simple!" answered Harborne. "Allow me."

He reached down for the leather case and unstrapped it. From within he took . . . a magic-lantern!

"What!" I exclaimed. "A magic-lantern?"

"With cinematograph attachment! Here, you see, is the film--not improved by having been in the river. Some kind of South American spider, is it not?--beautifully coloured and on a black ground. The plank, supported upon the window-ledge and the upturned case, did duty for a table, and as Jamieson went up the ladder, and surveyed the place from the south-east, this was directed from the window of the end house across the few intervening yards of Spindle Lane and through the open laboratory window on to the north-west corner of the wall.

"The beam from the lens would be hidden by the partition and only the weird image visible from the porter's point of view--though had he mounted further up the ladder and glanced over the wall he must have observed the ray of light across the lane. The familiar illuminated circle, usually associated with such demonstrations, was ingeniously eliminated by having a transparent photograph on an opaque ground. The Professor then retreated to the back door and hauled up his boat by the painter--which he would, of course, have attached there. He pulled upstream to return his boat and to sink his apparatus. He was probably already disguised--his fur coat would have concealed this from Jamieson."

I stared at Harborne in very considerable amazment.

"You are apparently surprised," he said with a smile; "but there is really nothing very remarkable in it all. I have not bored you with all the little details that led to the conclusion, nor related how I suffered a second ducking in leaving the end house; but my solution was no more than a plausible

hypothesis until a happy inspiration, born of nothing more palpable than my own imaginings, led me to search for and find the cinematograph. You are about to ask where I found it: I answer, in the deep hole above Long's boat-house where Jimmy Baker made his big catch last summer. Brayme-Skepley, being a man of very high reasoning powers, would, I argued, deposit it up and not down-stream, knowing that the river would be dragged. He would furthermore put it in the hole, so that the current should not carry it below college.

"There are, however, still one or two points that need clearing up. As to the blood, that offered no insurmountable difficulty to a physiologist; and, by Jove!" . . . . He suddenly plunged his hand into the case . . . . "This rubber ring from a soda-water bottle, ingeniously mounted upon a cane handle, accounts for the mysterious tracks. The point to which I particularly allude is the object of the Professor's disappearance."

"I think," I said, "that I can offer a suggestion. He found, too late to withdraw, that his famous theory had a flaw in it, and could devise no less elaborate means of hiding the fact and at the same time of so destroying his apparatus as to leave no trace whereby his great reputation could be marred."

"That is my own idea," agreed Harborne. "For which reason I have carefully covered such very few tracks as he left, and have decided that this handsome case, with its tell-tale inscription--J. B. S.--must be destroyed. My conclusions are not for the world, which is at perfect liberty to believe that Professor Brayme-Skepley was carried off by an unclassified aptera!"

And so, somewhere or other, Professor Brayme-Skepley is pursuing his distinguished career under a new name, while Harborne allows the world to persist in its opinion.

* *

Joseph G. Amedeo has just reprinted another scarce Rohmer title, THE EXPLOITS OF CAPTAIN O'HAGAN. This handsome new hardbound edition (1968) is available at $4.00 from Bookfinger, Box 487, Peter Stuyvesant Station, New York, N. Y. 10009. Other titles are scheduled for reprinting in the near future.

PETRIE LETTER

by Bruce Pelz

Harley Street
London, 1 April 1898

My dear Smith,

I was delighted to hear from you again, and I regret the press of business that has prevented me from replying to your letter sooner.

Early last year I was able to purchase a well-established practice for a very reasonable amount, and since then I have been kept quite busy with my professional duties. The practice, I regret to say, had been allowed to deteriorate quite badly, and it has taken some hard work to bring it up to its previous high position of integrity. But from the unceasing flow of patients to my door, I think I can say with all modesty that I have succeeded fairly well. I am now able to command a very handsome income, and to attract to my doors the better classes of people who once before called here for medical advice. Of course, I still do my fair share of charity work in the wards; it is expected. But I confess I take a proper pride indeed in having members of the peerage among my patients.

The former resident was a brilliant physician who built the practice up almost from scratch, but in later years he appears to have treated his professional duties with shameful disinterest. His patients were forced to schedule their consultations to fit his strange hours in residence--hours which became gradually less frequent as time wore on, until at last he was hardly available for more than two hours a week.

As I am sure you will realize, this is a very unprofessional attitude for a physician. To make matters worse, the while he was away from his duties he was running up the close and down the stair with--of all people--a detective! He could be seen in almost any part of England--and occasionally on the

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Continent--in this strange company. The only place he could not be seen was in his consulting rooms! Eventually, of course, his patients began to consult other physicians, and, as I remarked, the practice deteriorated until it must perforce be sold or abandoned entirely. At this stage I happened on the scene, and after my purchase of the practice a few of the former patients began to return.

I fear I am rather incensed at my predecessor's neglect of his duties. The Hippocratic Oath and what is to me--though you may laugh--an innate sense of what is right and decent both dictate that a doctor of human ills should stick to his calling and not go hareing about consorting with the police and common criminals! He should leave the "adventuring" to the soldiers of fortune and others with few responsibilities to humanity.

I suppose I am being too harsh on my predecessor. It may be that he found, ultimately, that medicine was not his true calling. Indeed, I believe I saw, just the other day, at the book shop, that he has written a volume or two about his experiences with the detective; perhaps he will find his true calling in writing.

In any case, I expect his former patients will soon forget the inconvenience--and, in some cases, hardships--he caused them, under my ministrations. His name has almost faded out on the door--luckily, "Watson" being six letters long, our names were the same length, and the gilt letters almost cover the old spaces exactly.

But enough of my rather humdrum existence--though I would not seek to change it. I should, however, be glad to hear of your exploits in the Orient when you can find time to write.

Sincerely,

Petrie

* *

The late Ordean Hagen's recently released WHO DONE IT: AN ENCYCLOPEDIC GUIDE TO MYSTERY, DETECTIVE AND SUSPENSE FICTION (R. R. Bowker Co., 1180 Ave. of the Americas, New York, N. Y. 10036) includes a bibliography of Rohmer's work. The price is $18.95 postpaid.

GOOD OLD PETRIE

by David Braveman

Flinders[1] Petrie was born at Tanis, Egypt, in 1884, the son of William Matthew Flinders Petrie. The elder Petrie (1853-1942), by his early forties an archaeologist of brilliant preeminence and later knighed for his studies, was at the time engaged in excavations at the Temple there. When young Petrie was six years old his father moved the family to England to accept the Edwards chair in Egyptology at University College, London, a post he was to hold until 1933.[2] Little is known of Petrie's boyhood and we can only assume that he survived unscarred his formative years in a Victorian household.

Rather than send his boy to the college where he was employed, the father shipped Petrie off to Edinburgh to complete his education, and there he became friendly with a young lecturer, Andrew Sterling, father of his son-in-law to be,[3] and with Stacey, who figures in RETURN OF DR. FU-MANCHU.

The summer[4] of 1912[5] found Petrie practicing medicine, but making an evidently unrewarding professional round in his "beastly healthy district,"

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[1]That Petrie was so christened is clear beyond peradventure. On this point I have the assurance of R. G. Fuller, Jr., of Augusta, Maine, perhaps the greatest Orientalist either bank of the Kennebec River has ever known.

[2]See ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITTANICA for a full review of Sir Flinders' life.

[3]FU MANCHU'S BRIDE, pp. 8, 13. All references are to the Pyramid edition save where noted.

[4]". . . the intense heat having driven most of the residents out of town . . . ," (MYSTERY OF DR. FU-MANCHU, Corgi Books, p. 13).

[5]Here, as elsewhere, save where noted, the author assumes events to have taken place in the year immediately preceding book publication, since Petrie generally wrote his opening chapters before an adventure had concluded. See MYSTERY OF DR. FU-MANCHU, Corgi Books, p. 63.

near the tramline in a prosy three-story[6] house with room enough to lodge Smith on occasion. In this ivy-covered cottage, surrounded by nine elms and facing a common in a not-too-remote[7] suburb of London, Petrie had his surgery and his upstairs study, and sported himself to such conveniences as a telephone and a housekeeper called Mrs. Newsome.[8] Since she evidently had her own room, there were other help, and Smith was a sometime guest in the house, apparently it contained no fewer than four bedrooms. A red leather writing table (with blotting pad) that contained a drawer in which Petrie kept his revolver, a matching armchair, bookshelves, a white cane chair in the study, a carpet in front of the fireplace in the study, a rack in the downstairs hall where Petrie hung his cap[9]--these are all of Petrie's household goods of which we are told.[10]

The year 1914[11] marked Petrie's return to England,

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[6]Or more, since RETURN OF DR. FU-MANCHU contains reference to a top-bedroom, a meaningless term when applied to a house of fewer than three floors with no bedroom on the first.

[7]It was served by a Tube station (RETURN OF DR. FU-MANCHU, p. 92) in addition to the tramline mentioned above.

[8]RETURN OF DR. FU-MANCHU, p. 83. The reference to an unnamed landlady in MYSTERY OF DR. FU-MANCHU (Corgi Books, p. 76) affords in itself a subject for study beyond the scope of this paper. Was she Mrs. Newsome? Or someone else from whom, after MYSTERY and before RETURN, Petrie bought the house? Perhaps "landlady" was an inaccurately used word. Clearly Petrie owned the house at some point, for he sold it in DAUGHTER OF FU MANCHU (p. 176). Only the grantee indices for 1913 under P at the London registry of deeds could shed light on this problem.

[9]He later switched to a soft hat (HAND OF FU-MANCHU, p. 143).

[10]RETURN OF DR. FU-MANCHU, pp. 31, 42, 55, 83-85, 172; MYSTERY OF DR. FU-MANCHU, Corgi Books, p. 76.

[11]HAND OF FU-MANCHU, which took place during November 1916--April 1917, refers to RETURN OF DR. FU-MANCHU as having transpired two years before.

his modest means exhausted by two years of searching through Egypt for Kâramanèh. Aside from a bothersome conversational habit of invoking the deity, penury seems to have affected him little. By then he had acquired a knowledge of chemistry so profound as to merit the respect of Fu-Manchu[12] but was still a general practitioner in his old district.

Six months having been consumed by the events related in RETURN OF DR. FU-MANCHU, Petrie, with Kara and her brother Azîz, set sail from Marseilles for Port Said. He apparently meant to set up practice in Cairo, but in November 1916 he was hurriedly recalled to London. He had sold his London house[13] and practice to Dr. Murray, and the proceeds, together with the timely demise of a distant relative in the north, emboldened Petrie to propose to make Kara an honest woman. Their engagement was celebrated with Barton's man Homopoulo over a bottle of '45 port.

Fu-Manchu was driven from England in the spring of 1917[14]. Petrie and Kara were married in Egypt, and a daughter was born to them in early 1918[15]. The three-week-old baby's supposed death but actual abduction by Fu-Manchu is the subject of FU MANCHU'S BRIDE.

From Petrie's statement in DAUGHTER OF FU MANCHU that he hadn't heard a dacoit's call in ten years, we may speculate that he may have had another brush with Fu-Manchu[16] about 1920. Petrie's father was knighted

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[12] In the summer of 1912, Fu-Manchu thought Petrie a fool, but by the autumn he knew better (MYSTERY OF DR. FU-MANCHU, Corgi Books, pp. 86, 162; RETURN OF DR. FU-MANCHU, p. 110).

[13] See note[8] above, also DAUGHTER OF FU MANCHU, p. 177. The sale was before Petrie left England; on return, he lived at the New Louvre Hotel.

[14] HAND OF FU-MANCHU, p. 191; see also DAUGHTER OF FU MANCHU, p. 88, for substantiation.

[15] FU MANCHU'S BRIDE, p. 165.

[16] Fu's name was hyphenated as late as 1929 when Hurst, Blackett published THE BOOK OF FU-MANCHU, but had lost it by 1931 in DAUGHTER OF FU MANCHU. The latter refers to events taking place in 1930. Future and more ambitious scholars will undoubedly fix the exact date when the hyphen was jettisoned, awaiting which, this author modestly and arbitrarily suggests that Black Friday, 1929, was the day.

in 1924, and in 1925 Smith finally left Burma to take a post in Scotland Yard.[17] He obviously served with great honor, for by 1930 he was Sir Denis. Petrie, too, had prospered. He had a house in a quiet thoroughfare in Cairo, was attended by a Nubian servant, and though he described himself as "only an ordinary practitioner," he was well on his way to becoming an internationally recognized authority on tropical medicine. Indeed, sometime during the early Thirties he received the medal of the Royal Society for his researches in this field.[18]

Things picked up again in 1931 when Petrie, "no whit changed," burst on the scene in MASK OF FU MANCHU with a typical "Thank God, old man!" to Smith. By then Petrie's fondness for spirits was well enough known that he was provided with a drink without his friends having to inquire if he would like one; nevertheless his faculties were unimpaired.[19]

Cutting short a brief visit to London in 1933, Petrie came to the south of France to help the authorities there put down a strange epidemic. By that time his hair was liberally streaked with gray, but he owned a car and had taken up a roulette system as a hobby. Narrowly missing becoming the father-in-law of his enemy of twenty years, he regained his long-lost fifteen-year-old daughter[20] (his hair blanched in the process) only to lose her again on the way home to Cairo. Her recovery fell to her fiance, Alan Sterling, for as Smith with accustomed sensitivity observed, neither he nor Petrie was getting younger. Nonetheless Petrie was in London for the close of the

[17] DAUGHTER OF FU MANCHU, p. 55.

[18] FU MANCHU'S BRIDE, p. 14.

[19] Many years after residence at the New Louvre--which evidently was interrupted by a stay in Fleet Street (HAND OF FU MANCHU, p. 153)--Petrie recognized the brother of the manager, M. Samarkan (MASK OF FU MANCHU, Crime Club, pp. 176, 179).

[20] Dating of these events is most difficult, but their placement in 1933 instead of 1932 would have made Fleurette 15, rather than 14, years old at that time, which would have been a little more compatible with Alan Sterling's infatuation for her.

chase,[21] exacting from Fu Manchu a promise never to intrude upon Fleurette's life in any way.

True to the code of the mandarin, Fu Manchu kept his vow. He turned his attention to Ardatha, Bart Kerrigan, and others, and from Kerrigan we last had word in 1939[22] that Petrie, "a modest genius," was alive and well in Cairo, practicing medicine--as he no doubt does today, wherever he may be residing.[23]

Fleurette Petrie Sterling's wedding remains to the imagination. One may hardly doubt that Nayland Smith rapped a few terse but appropriate comments and tugged his earlobe a time or two in honor of the occasion. Mrs. Newsome and Homopoulo must have fought their way through the crowded ballroom of the New Louvre Hotel, the odor of foul shag mingling with that of the hors d'oeuvres and champagne they dispensed. A tall, elderly Chinese, his green eyes veiled, sipped at a flagon of potent elixir, missing nothing. An incredibly ancient marmoset chattered at the even more ancient shoulder of his master. A whiff of mimosa was on the wind.

May we not leave them there? For we are secure in the knowledge that so long as ink clings to paper we may return to find them unchanged.

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[21] Evidently in 1934 (TRAIL OF FU MANCHU).

[22] DRUMS OF FU MANCHU, p. 183. Late enough in the adventure so as to be placed, in my judgment, in the same year as the book's publication.

[23] We may speculate that, his life unsettled by the military coup which led eventually to the present Egyptian government, Petrie removed from Cairo with Kara and the ever-dependent Aziz in tow. He must have perceived that when Naguib seized power in 1954, Fu Manchu could not be far behind, ambitious to unite all of the Arab nations under his domination.

* *

Pyramid is planning to reissue the entire Fu Manchu series on a monthly basis, starting with THE BRIDE OF FU MANCHU on November 15. This is very good news, but let's continue to push for reprinting of more non-Fu titles, particularly the short story collections. Address your letters to Richard Heller, Editor-in-Chief, Pyramid Publications, Inc., 444 Madison Ave., New York, N. Y. 10022.

THE LITERARY TRADITION OF BROW SPRAYING

by J. R. Christopher

Those readers who have gone with Cavor under the surface of the Moon will remember his interview with the Grand Lunar. I remind them of two passages, both from Chapter 24 of H. G. Wells' THE FIRST MAN IN THE MOON:

> "[The Grand Lunar] talked with his attendants, as I suppose, upon the strange superficiality and unreasonableness of man, who lives on the mere surface of a world, a creature of waves and winds and all the chances of space, who cannot even unite to overcome the beasts that prey upon his kind, and yet who dares to invade another planet. During this aside I sat thinking, and then at his desire I told him of the different sorts of men. He searched me with questions. 'And for all sorts of work you have the same sort of men. But who thinks? Who governs?'
>
> I gave him an outline of the democratic method.
>
> When I had done he ordered cooling sprays upon his brow, and then requested me to repeat my explanation conceiving something had miscarried."

> "'But what good is this war?' asked the Grand Lunar. . . .
>
> 'Oh! as for good!' said I, 'it thins the population!'
>
> 'But why should there be a need--?'
>
> There came a pause, the cooling sprays impringed upon his brow, and then he spoke again."

Thus H. G. Wells described the Selenite treatment for intellectual anxiety; in at least one other literary work is there a character who sprayed his brows--Moris Klaw in Sax Rohmer's THE DREAM DETECTIVE. Numerous examples exist in the ten short stories in this volume--~ set down only ehe first (from the second

section of "Case of the Tragedies in the Greek Room"):

> "From the lining of the flat-topped hat he took out one of those small cylindrical scent sprays and played its contents upon his high, bald brow. An odour of verbena filled the air. He replaced the spray in the hat, the hat upon his scantily thatched crown.
>
> 'There is here a smell of dead men!' he explained."

Since Moris Klaw used the spray (at least, usually) to dismiss odors of death, I find it odd that he sprayed his brow, not his nose; no doubt this has something to do with psychic, rather than physical, odors. (Once, in the second section of "Case of the Chord in G," Klaw used his spray on "his high, bald crown" to cover the odor of a pair of armadillos.)

I know of no other examples of literary brow spraying. Does any reader? Was there any time when such a procedure was part of any literary or actual subculture? (Klaw referred to it as "a custom of the Romans" in the first section of "Case of the Whispering Poplars," but did they have sprays?) If not, I think I am safe in assuming that the answer to Searles' wonder over the origin of Moris Klaw is that the curio dealer by Wapping Old Stairs was really a Selenite in disguise.

* *

FLEET STREET REPORT

By Andrew Jay Peck

Since the appearance of our January issue, The Rohmer Review has been reviewed in Startling Mystery Stories #13 and the Spring 1969 issue of Journal of Popular Culture. Subscriptions to the latter quarterly, which covers every conceivable aspect of popular culture, are available at $4.00/year from Ray B. Browne, University Hall, Bowling Green University, Bowling Green, Ohio 43402.

* * *

A meeting was held at the Editor's Baton Rouge home on 25 January 1969 to commemorate the first anniversary of the Society's founding. Associate Editor Robert E. Briney joined five Louisiana members in celebrating the occasion. Highlighting the day's activities were a display of Collier's excerpts with Rohmerian art by John Richard Flanagan, a talk on thugs and dacoits, a Rohmer quiz (won by Bob Briney), tapes of four episodes from the Fu Manchu radio serial (provided by Tom Hammond), and supper at a Chinese restaurant.

* * *

Luther Norris writes that he has commissioned the first statue of Fu Manchu ever to be offered to serious collectors. The figurine is by J. Cassin-Scott, famous English book illustrator and model maker. It is cast in latex composition, hand painted, 8 inches tall, and mounted on a free-standing wooden base. It will sell for $15.00, which includes special packing and surface mail from England ($3.00 extra for air shipments). The figurine can be ordered either from Mr. Norris, 3844 Watseka Avenue, Culver City, California 90230, or Cassin Figures, London. In either case, allow at least six weeks for hand painting and finishing.

* * *

The June 1969 edition of Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine contains D. R. Bensen's "The Fu Manchusical," the first scene of the first act of a musical based on Fu Manchu. It was initially supposed to be nothing more than a parody, but the musical may yet become a reality. Mr. Bensen has said, ". . . who knows? Some readers may yet find themselves in an actual theater, waiting (with perhaps mixed feelings) for the curtain to rise . . ." If you think that seems improbable, remember BAKER STREET!

Speaking of unlikely occurrences, Fu Manchu popped up in the Mary Worth comic strip on 27 April 1969 when one of the characters said, "When it comes to slow torture, Jules Herrick, you could give lessons to Dr. Fu Manchu!"

An article by Will Stanton in the March 1969 Reader's Digest is entitled "Open Season--On What?";

it is a humorous look at the problems of opening modern packages. Fu is mentioned in connection with the "press to open" packages:

> "The powdered-sugar and macaroni people favor the thumbnail opening. At the top of the package is a semicircle with simulated perforations around the edge. Underneath they have printed a little joke: 'Press thumbnail here.' Unless you have the thumbnail of a Fu Manchu, all you're going to do is cave in the side of the box--and there goes the old ball game. Better plan something else for supper."

Our favorite fiend also appeared in a Coca-Cola commercial. It showed Fu and other fictional villains becoming good natured after drinking a Coke. Now why didn't Sir Denis ever try that?

A letter from a London reader, which appeared in the 14 February 1969 issue of Time, protested the use of the term "Hong Kong" flu. He asserted that the virus had been manufactured in the secret mainland laboratories of the Devil Doctor, and would be more properly called Flu Manchu.

* * *

The December 1968 issue of The Count Dracula Society Quarterly (Vol. 1, No. 4) contains Maureen Fitzgerald's interesting article "The Anatomy of Fu Manchu." Subscriptions to the magazine are $2.00/year from Gordon R. Guy, 22 Canterbury Street, East Hartford, Connecticut 06118.

Volume 1, Number 4 of The Pontine Dossier has Alvin F. Germeshausen's capsule biography of Moris Klaw, and Volume 2, Number 2 contains an article by Charles R. L. Power, "The Old Doctor of Limehouse," dealing with a certain "Dr. F.," who has appeared, thus far, in three of the Solar Pons stories by August Derleth. Those who would like more information about the Dossier should contact Luther Norris.

* * *

Rohmer's "The Curse of a Thousand Kisses" was reprinted in THE 2nd AVON FANTASY READER (1969), edited by Donald A. Wollheim and George Ernsberger.

BORIS KARLOFF (1887-1969)

We were all saddened by the death of Boris Karloff on 3 February 1969. Mr. Karloff, who chilled millions with his performance in FRANKENSTEIN and in other stage and screen horror presentations, died of a respiratory disease at the age of 81. He was a memorable Fu Manchu in THE MASK OF FU MANCHU (1932), his only appearance as the Devil Doctor.

* * *

A 30" X 40" poster of Boris Karloff from THE MASK OF FU MANCHU is available for $1.00 (plus postage) from Famous Faces, Box 441, Norristown, Pennsylvania 19404.

LETTERS TO LIMEHOUSE

Wherein appear excerpts the Editor believes will be of interest to SRS members generally.

From John E. Carroll, Baltimore, Maryland:

I plan to write to Pyramid Books in an attempt to persuade them to reprint SHE WHO SLEEPS and others mentioned in TRR. The former title has an action which proceeds briskly and interestingly. It contains only one bit of dated material: a song title from the Jazz Age. Yet, this age brought forth the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamen. Some years ago, I obtained the now rather scarce three-volume set of THE TOMB OF TUTANKHAMEN by A. C. Mace and H. Carter. To me, it is the only book with a blow-by-blow description of the findings.

I do not know whether Sax Rohmer, in being inspired by the archeological "find" of such magnitude, intentionally patterned his hero, Barry Cumberland, after Lord Carnarvon, the millionaire sportsman who financed this expedition; but either one would have been the counterpart of the wealthy, virile, athletic-appearing cinema hero of the 1920's. He was the one with the blond hair, natty sportcoat, and high-powered, pale yellow sportscar. His manner was one of easy assurance.

The re-prints of [Rohmer's] books go into many millions, and many of the English ones were used in promotional schemes. Little pocket-sized editions bear the imprint of Cadbury's Cocoa and one foolscap edition of THE EXPLOITS OF CAPTAIN O'HAGAN, which was published by Jarrold's, has four pages at the front and four at the rear of old-time medicine advertisements after the style of Smith Bros. Cough Drops and Lydia E. Pinkham's.

* * *

From Douglas G. Greene, Chicago, Illinois:

Robert Briney's informal survey was particularly informative and well-written. I do think, however, that he was too unkind to the last Fu Manchu book, EMPEROR FU MANCHU. I found the story absorbing--it was a great improvement on THE SHADOW OF FU MANCHU and RE-ENTER FU MANCHU, both of which are very choppy,

jumping from scene to scene for no discernible reason. EMPEROR also switches scene quickly but there are stylistic reasons for each switch. I found other moods of the doctor in that book than quiet menace and maniacal rage--he still treats his marmoset with tenderness, for instance. Finally, I cannot see that it is more unreasonable for Fu Manchu to be in Communist China than Manhattan--of the two locales, I find the former more credible.

* * *

From John Harwood, New Bedford, Massachusetts:

I was interested in the query about the origin of Fu Manchu's mustache. The first thing I did was to read the descriptions of the doctor in the first and last books of the series. Neither one contained any mention of a mustache.

Then I got a copy of THE BAD GUYS by William K. Everson from the library and checked the Fu Manchu pictures. On page 40 is a picture of Warner Oland in a scene from THE MYSTERIOUS DR. FU MANCHU (1929). He is shown with a mustache, the ends of which, come down just below the corners of his mouth. On pages 40 and 41 Boris Karloff appears as Fu Manchu in scenes from THE MASK OF FU MANCHU (1932). In these pictures he is shown with a long mustache that droops below his chin. Evidently the mustache was something dreamed up by the movie-makers. On page 8 there is a picture of Warner Oland with Pearl White in the serial, THE FATAL RING (1917). In this picture he is shown as an Oriental villain with a mustache that comes just below the corners of his mouth.

Probably in the early days of the movies (and the stage dramas) a mustache was a sign of villainy. In references to these early melodramas, we are always reading about the villain twirling his mustache. Maybe this has something to do with it. Then when Fu Manchu appeared in the movies as the villain he was depicted in similar make-up as the earlier Oriental villains.

* * *

From Luther L. Norris, Culver City, California:

Wonder how many . . . can identify the source of the following quotation . . . ?

"Why, Mister Wolff, would a Chineyman lend him bigger more dollars on that there ring than a white man? Chineymen are very bed men. I saw one once in the drammar. Don't you love drammar, Mr. Wolff? I do. The Chineyman's name in this drammar was Mister Fu somethin'. That's the way I cotched it in my ear. And oh--was he bad! Why he p'isened people, and killed 'em, and locked 'em in rooms and laughed at 'em. He was--he was just awful. And he had long mustishes. Oh--you'd a-been scairt to death of him, Mr. Wolff, if you'd seed him. All Chineymen are very bad, bean't they, Mr. Wolff?"

"Lord no, child. You've been drinking in Sax Rohmer's 'Fu Manchu,' that's all. The Chinese are a super-race. They are more patient, persevering, trustworthy, frugal, hard-working and last but far from least, honest, than any white man who ever walked in two shoes. Just a bit inclined to accept blindly certain supersti--well, by that word, Lola, I mean beliefs. Beliefs that have no foundation. See?"
[For the answer, see the bottom of p. 31.]

* * *

From Keith Peterson, Chicago, Illinois:

I thought I would include this tidbit of Rohmerania: a little "under-ground" booklet called THE HASHISH COOKBOOK by Panama Rose--copyrt © Si Fan(!). It is dated 1966 by the Gnaoud Press. On the last page is the following quotation: "Only a fool seeks the black smoke when the jackals sit in a ring--Sax Rohmer" Something for the completist, if nothing else.

* * *

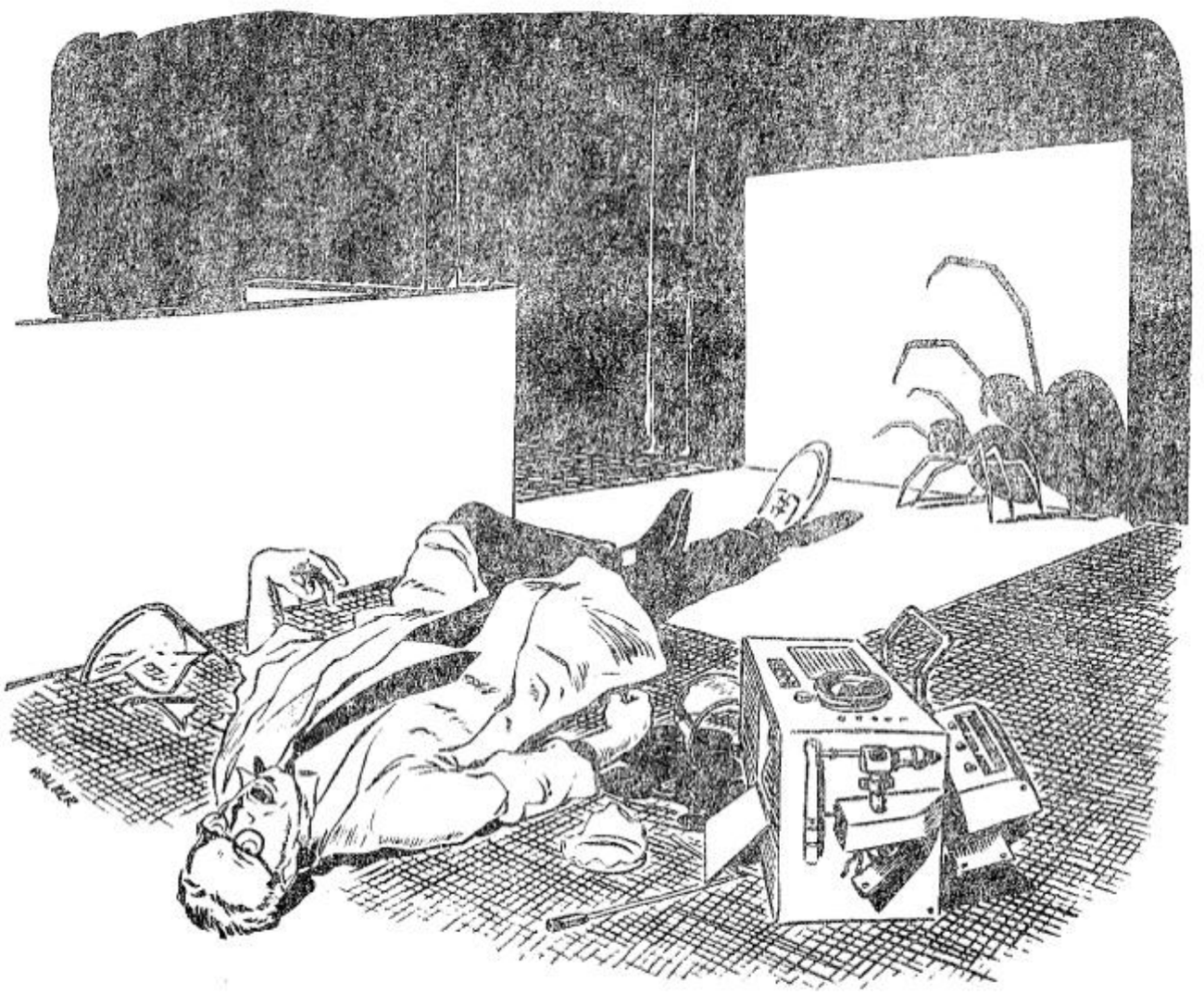
From James Wade, Seoul, Korea:

In Mar. 28 TIME, Prince Rainier is pictured and identified as wearing "an Oriental cap and a La Mancha" mustache. This is obviously a slip; NEWSWEEK, same issue, got it right by calling it a Fu Manchu mustache. (La Mancha could refer to Don Quixote; but his mustache is not usually pictured as this thin,

droopy type.) Also, in Tom Wolfe's THE PUMP HOUSE GANG, p. 121, is the phrase "Fu Manchu beard." So much for the clean-shaven Fu! Public fancy, abetted probably by the movie image, has bewhiskered him beyond the author's power to shave.

Here is . . . the Fu Manchu drawing [by Sandra Mattielli] I promised to send . . . . The following is a quote from the book which the drawing illustrates . . . .

> "Those who have not done their homework, and have arrived on the scene without a background in Oriental philosophy, history, religions, sociology, and anthropology . . . often try to make judgements in the limited context of their Western preconceptions of Dr. Fu Manchu, the fictional Oriental arch-fiend."
>
> --KOREAN PATTERNS by Paul S. Crane, Hollym Corp., publishers, Seoul, 1967. (A popular handbook by a long-time medical missionary in Korea intended to help the newcomer understand Korean culture and psychology).

* * *

The book referred to in the Norris letter is THE RIDDLE OF THE YELLOW ZURI by Harry Stephen Keeler, first published November 1930 by E. P. Dutton & Co., N.Y.